



EAST OAHU COUNTY FARM BUREAU

910 CALIFORNIA AVE., WAHIAWA, HI 96786

August 3, 2015

Councilmember Ernest Martin, Chair
Councilmember Ikaika Anderson, Vice Chair
Honolulu City Council
530 South King St., Room 202
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

RECEIVED
CITY CLERK
C & C OF HONOLULU
2015 AUG -3 AM 10:19

Dear Chair Martin, Vice Chair Anderson, and Members of the Committee:

The East Oahu County Farm Bureau, which with approximately 300 members represents the area of northeast Oahu from Waimanalo to Kahuku, **opposes Bill 53**, which would include the proposed Malaekahana housing development in the Ko'olau Loa *Sustainable Communities Plan*. We **strongly support the proposed floor draft, Bill 53 FD1**, which would eliminate references to the Malaekahana development. This major development, if built, will significantly impact agricultural lands between Laie and Kahuku, including existing, productive farms, and will largely eliminate the division between these two communities. It will remove from actual or potential production not only the land developed for housing, but any adjacent areas that may have to be used as buffer zones between residential areas and whatever farms may be left after construction. Oahu has already lost much of its productive agricultural land to development, and loses more every year. Honolulu, the most isolated major city in the country, now imports more than 80% of its food. Oahu cannot afford to lose more of its agricultural lands.

Conversion of a significant area of agricultural land to a new urban area contradicts both the spirit and the letter of the existing Ko'olau Loa plan, and also contradicts the rest of the proposed plan revision, which requires the preservation of agricultural land, open space, and historic and cultural resources, and specifies that "The Sustainable Communities Plan calls for the preservation and expansion of agricultural lands..." (Sec. 3.2, p. 3-15). "The policies and guidelines related to Agricultural Areas recognize the importance of protecting existing agricultural land from being converted to urban uses, thus protecting the availability and crop production potential of those lands" (Sec. E.3.2, p. E-2). These policies and guidelines include "Protect and preserve agricultural lands from conversion to uses that are primarily residential, industrial, or commercial in purpose," (Sec. 3.2.1, p. 3-16) and "Discourage subdivision of Agriculture designated and zoned lands for residential uses" (Sec. 3.2.2, p. 3-17). The proposed development also conflicts with Honolulu's General Plan, which "designates the Ko'olau Loa region as a rural area where physical growth and development will be managed so that 'an undesirable spreading of development is prevented'" and "specifies that Ko'olau Loa's natural resources and predominately 'country' character should be maintained by allowing only limited development in established communities, and that agricultural lands along the Windward, North Shore, and Wai'anae coasts are to be maintained for diversified agriculture" (Chapter 1, p. 1-1).

The Ko'olau Loa Plan is called a *Sustainable* Communities Plan for a reason: it is not an urban development plan, but a plan to maintain and improve the sustainability of Koolau Loa's communities. The preservation of agricultural lands is a critical and explicit component of the plan. A community that cannot feed itself is not sustainable. Therefore, we strongly support the proposed floor draft that would remove wording related to the Malaekahana development from the revised *Sustainable* Communities Plan.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Frederick M. Mencher
for Grant Hamachi, President
East Oahu County Farm Bureau